

The background of the book cover is a dark, moody photograph. It shows a close-up of a person's hand holding a yellow pen, poised to write on a lined notebook. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the paper and the grip of the hand. The overall aesthetic is professional and focused on the act of writing.

# LOOK BETTER IN WRITING

A QUICK &  
EASY GUIDE  
TO  
PUNCTUATION  
MARKS

NAILAH HARVEY

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Look Better In Writing:  
A Quick & Easy Guide to Punctuation Marks

I acknowledge every writer, author, blogger, copywriter, wordsmith, and grammar enthusiast. Writing is definitely a skill, and I salute you for honing your craft.

*I dedicate this e-book to those who are less confident in their writing skills. Your writing swag is bound to improve after reading this.*

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## Introduction

*"In writing, punctuation plays the role of body language. It helps readers hear you the way you want to be heard." –Russell Baker*

Greetings, good people! Allow me to formally introduce myself. My name is Nailah Harvey. I'm a 6x published author and I teach people how to **look better in writing** by providing grammar and writing tips on all of my social media platforms, as well as my blog: [www.nharv.com](http://www.nharv.com). Now that the elevator pitch is out of the way, let's get down to business.

Why did I write this book? I wrote *Look Better In Writing: A Quick & Easy Guide to Punctuation Marks* because I realize that we are transitioning into a time where people are writing more books, creating more websites, and engaging in more social media. While I love authorship, technology, and branding, I believe the negative side effects of public platforms can be damaging to one's reputation. Social media is the new marketing tool and will definitely expose the good, the bad, and the ugly. Social media has taught me that some people do not understand the power of words. Not only do words have the power of life and death (mentally, spiritually, and emotionally), but they also have the power to give a positive or negative first impression concerning your writing.

Think about it. Before you are invited to a job interview, your future employer reads your resume. Before customers decide to buy your book on Amazon, they typically read the book description first to see if the book sounds interesting. (Trust me, I've been on both ends of the spectrum.) Unless you're a photographer, people typically read the "About Me" section on your website to feel you out. People also often read Instagram captions, **Tweets**, and **Facebook** posts of influencers before they follow them. What I'm trying to say is, people still read; therefore, writing is still valuable. So why not do the best you can to make sure your writing is up to par before exposing it to the world?! Believe it or not, people judge you by your writing skills. I don't, but other people do. 😊

Anyway, I'm here to help you put your best foot forward (grammatically speaking). In this e-book, I will break down grammar in terms of punctuation marks.

But first, **what is grammar?**

Grammar is the rules that make up a language. Grammar is the foundation of language because it's the foundation of how we communicate with one another. Two very important elements of grammar include **syntax** (*arrangement of words*) and **linguistics** (*the study of the forms of words*). Without knowing how to arrange words into groups, sentences, phrases, questions, expressions, and paragraphs, we would simply have words, but no communication. Punctuation helps arrange words into understandable written communication.

Like you, I sometimes struggle with the basics of grammar. I've been out of grade school for years and that's typically where most of us were introduced to grammar. Nevertheless, I've worked as an ESL teacher for years (including teaching overseas in South Korea) so I find myself being exposed to the basics of American Standard English quite often.

After conducting online surveys about writing concerns, my target audience revealed that they need the most help with punctuating properly and correctly. Well, me too. That's why this particular book is super special to me. It allowed me to learn as I teach.

Correct punctuation is a skill that can help writers make a more pleasant reading experience for their audience(s). "Punctuation marks are symbols that are used to aid the clarity and comprehension of written language." There are 14 commonly used punctuation marks in (American) English grammar: periods, question marks, exclamation points, commas, semicolons, colons, hyphens, dashes, apostrophes, ellipses, parentheses, braces, brackets, and quotation marks. For the sake of this e-book, I will only focus on these punctuation marks.

Whether you're writing an email to a co-worker, or a 4-page letter to a significant other, punctuation marks can help transform your writing from bland to flavorful. Not to mention, punctuation marks show your understanding of the English language. For instance, a simple apostrophe can change "your welcome" to "you're welcome." Yes, there is a difference!

Remember: Correct grammar usage allows us to **look better in writing**.



# Periods



Of the 14 commonly used punctuation marks, three of them are used for sentence endings and one of those sentence endings is the period. A **period** is a punctuation mark used at the end of a complete sentence, or clause. (A clause is a grammatical unit, similar to a sentence, including a subject and predicate. Throughout this e-book, I will use the terms *clause* and *sentence* interchangeably.) A period indicates whether or not a sentence is declarative.

## Example:

*Halian went to the store.*

The above example is a declarative sentence because it's stating something. It's not asking a question, or expressing excitement; therefore, a period is the correct punctuation concluding this sentence.

I like to think of a period as an abrupt stop. It's a red light. When writing sentences, make sure your goal is to stop when you include a period.

## Other example sentences:

*Halian loves to write.*

*Halian does not like cottage cheese.*

*Halian is addicted to Krispy Kreme doughnuts.*

## NaILAH'S TIPS



### Periods

#### DO:

- Use periods inside parentheses when it's a complete clause

#### DON'T:

- Don't use periods inside parentheses when the parenthetical material (what's inside the parentheses) is an incomplete clause